

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Claims 1-12 remain in this application. Claims 1, 2, 5, 6-9 and 12 have been amended. Claims 1 and 11 have been cancelled. The Examiner indicated that claims 2-4, 8 and 12 are allowable.

**Claim Objections**

**Claims 2-4, 8 and 12 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but the Examiner indicated that they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.**

Accordingly claims 2, 8 and 12 have been rewritten in an independent form, as suggested by the Examiner. Claims 2 and 4 depend from claim 2 and, therefore are also allowable.

Applicants also amended claim 5 and to depend from claim 2. Claim 6 depends from claim 5. Therefore, claims 5 and 6 should now be allowable.

**Claims Rejections**

**Claims 1 and 5-7 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant Admitted Prior Art (AAPA).**

As stated above, Applicants amended claim 5 and to depend from claim 2. Claim 6 depends from claim 5. Therefore, claims 5 and 6 should now be allowable.

Claim 1 has been cancelled.

With regard to claim 7, the Examiner stated that the “element being capable of” performing a function (of reversing direction of the fiber) is not a positive limitation in “any patentable sense”. Accordingly, applicants rewrote claim 7 by making it independent and by deleting the term “capable” from the claim. The amended claim states that “least one of said flanges including at least one smoothly curving arcuate fiber groove on a side facing said hub”, and “said fiber groove reverses fiber direction, so that fiber leads point in the same direction”. Applicants are not aware of prior art that contains a fiber groove that faces the hub and (simultaneously) reverses the direction of the fiber, nor is there a suggestion for such a group in any cited art.

Accordingly, claim 7 is not obvious and should be allowable.

**Claims 9-11 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent 5,802,237 to Pulido.**

Claim 9 is a method claim. It has been amended to require the steps of:

” providing at least two trimable flange preforms, each containing a plurality of fiber grooves, each of said fiber grooves being characterized by a different bend radius  $R_i$ ” and; and “trimming said preforms to a desired size, thereby producing a flanges of desired diameter, while cutting at least one groove and maintaining at least one groove of said plurality of fiber grooves extending substantially to the outer edge of said flange, said groove being at an angle  $\theta$  relative to the tangent line to the periphery of said flange so that said groove with a groove angle that is capable of maintaining maintains desired bend radius of an optical fiber”.

Thus, claim 9 requires that the preforms be trimable, and that after the preforms are trimmed to size and at least one groove is cut, there is always one other groove that will

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maintain the desired bend radius of the fiber. It is noted that no new subject matter has been added by this amendment.

Claim 10 depends from claim 9 as its base claim and, therefore, should also be allowable.

**Conclusion**


Based upon the above amendments, remarks, and papers of records, applicant believes the pending claims of the above-captioned application are in allowable form and patentable over the prior art of record. Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Applicant believes that no extension of time is necessary to make this Reply timely. Should applicant be in error, applicant respectfully requests that the Office grant such time extension pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) as necessary to make this Reply timely, and hereby authorizes the Office to charge any necessary fee or surcharge with respect to said time extension to the deposit account of the undersigned firm of attorneys, Deposit Account 03-3325.

Please direct any questions or comments to Svetlana Z. Short at 607-974-0412.

Respectfully submitted,

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Svetlana Z. Short  
Attorney for Assignee  
Registration Number: 34,432  
Corning Incorporated  
SP-TI-03-1  
Corning, NY 14831  
Phone: 607-974-0412